

same time making very clear that we agree with and intend to support the motion put forward by the hon. lady. We feel, however, there is another vehicle which can be used quite effectively. I will grant, Mr. Speaker, that this has not been successful in the past. Its record, as a matter of fact, has not been very impressive and it is about to die a natural death. I refer to the Prices and Incomes Commission.

This commission was established in June 1969. Its terms of reference were to inquire into, and report upon the causes, processes and consequences of inflation and to inform those making current price and income decisions, the general public and the government, on how price stability may best be achieved. Clearly the responsibility lies with this commission which is still in existence, although the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has indicated in a reply to a question that the Prices and Incomes Commission will go out of existence as of the end of June 1972. That answer may be found at page 1264 of *Hansard* for the present session. We have seen that the Prices and Incomes Commission, under its terms of reference, is in a position to give us the kind of national study a parliamentary committee would take at least a year or two to give us. A Joint Committee of the House of Commons and Senate spent a full year travelling across the country and making its recommendations. We have the report of the Batten royal commission in respect of three prairie provinces which is the result of almost two years of deliberations, hearing witnesses and making recommendations. We believe this is an urgent problem. Because of the urgency of the problem we believe the Prices and Incomes Commission could deal with the matter very quickly under its present structure and organizational set-up.

Therefore, I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale):

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after 'standards' and substituting the following:

"and because the Prices and Incomes Commission has failed to inform the general public on how food price stability may best be achieved, should forthwith amend the terms of reference of the commission to require it to investigate and report thereon before September 1, 1972."

The motion as amended would then read:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government has failed to cope with the problem of steadily rising food prices, which seriously affect Canadian living standards, and because the Prices and Incomes Commission has failed to inform the general public on how food price stability may best be achieved, should forthwith amend the terms of reference of the commission to require it to investigate and report thereon before September 1, 1972.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member for St. John's East has proposed an amendment to the motion moved by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis). I have some reservations concerning the procedural acceptability of the amendment. I will hear hon. members if they wish to assist the Chair. I would invite them to direct their remarks particularly to what seems to me to be the situation. If the amendment of the hon. member for St. John's East were accepted, it would seem we would in effect have a new question in that we would then be dealing with a reference to the Prices and Incomes Commission whereas the motion of the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway refers to a reference to

### *Increasing Food Prices*

a special committee of the House. This concerns me from a procedural standpoint. I think it is a new question. However, I would like to hear hon. members if they wish to assist the Chair.

**Mr. Aiken:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak briefly on this matter. The point is that the amendment is relevant to the main motion and is actually on the same subject matter. It is merely the latter portion of the amendment which would provide a different remedy. I think this is perfectly consistent. The main part of the motion moved by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway remains in the motion. The amendment merely alters the general procedure in dealing with the problem. I believe it is certainly relevant to the original motion. I do not think I need refer to Beauchesne in too much detail. Citation 203, however, states:

The law on the relevancy of amendments is that if they are on the same subject-matter with the original motion, they are admissible, but not when foreign thereto.

I think that is a clear and straightforward answer to the question which arises in Your Honour's mind. It is relevant. It is on the same subject matter as the original motion. That leaves it fairly broad. I believe that if one were restricted narrowly in respect of amendments, one would find difficulty in moving amendments. The hon. member who has just moved the amendment has not changed the subject matter of the original motion. His motion would merely alter the means by which the problem of the steadily rising food prices can be met. I think this is such a minor change in the nature of the motion, that it does not substantially affect it. I really cannot see any difficulty which would arise.

If the amendment were accepted and voted upon, it would merely mean that there would be concurrence in the motion has introduced and in her general statement. However the remedy would be slightly different. Instead of the subject matter being referred to a special committee for investigation, it would be referred to the Prices and Incomes Commission. I cannot see any real difficulty here.

• (1610)

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, it seems to me fairly clear that your concern about the amendment is justified. I am a little at a loss to understand why the mover of the amendment—although perhaps I am not at such a loss—left out the reference to the excessive profits of the supermarkets, something which in our view is relevant to the question of food prices. Perhaps the hon. member is not concerned about those profits as they relate to food prices. That is his business, not mine. This amendment entirely changes the thrust of the motion moved by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis). What she is seeking is an investigation by a committee of this parliament into the question of both steadily rising food prices and excessive supermarket profits. She is seeking to involve Parliament in the inquiry, and for Parliament to report before we rise for the summer recess, on the basis that no one can be certain we will be back next fall.

Because the matter of the rise in food prices is of such immense importance to the families of Canada, she wants the investigation to take place quickly, and the committee